its Export Promotion Councils, including the AEPC, more helpful to the exporters.

America's Opposition to India's Membership in APEC

2810. DR. JAGANNATH MISHRA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the U.S. does not want India to be included in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum now as the pace of Indian liberalisation fails to measure upto APEC standards; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government of India in regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) and (b) We are not aware of any such opposition by USA. In fact, APEC had decided in November 1993 to impose a moratorium for three years on admission of new members into APEC. The recent APEC Economic Leaders Meeting in Philippines during November 1996 did not admit any new member, but decided to evolve the criteria for admission of new members to be finalised at the next APEC Summit scheduled at Vancouver in 1997.

India had formally conveyed to members of APEC its interest in associating with APEC and participating in its activities. This has been taken up on a sustained basis with APEC member economics both directly as well as through our diplomatic Missions in these countries. The subject of India's membership has also been raised with individual APEC member economics during high level bilateral interactions. For example, the subject was taken up at the Foreign Ministers level during the ASEAN-Post Ministerial Conference in Jakarta in July 1996. It has also been discussed bilaterally during other ministerial meetings.

India will continue to reiterate its interest in membership of APEC on the basis of its geographical location, degree of trade and investment interaction and potential, size of India's economy, and ability to contribute to larger Asia-Pacific economic cooperation and liberalisation.

Filling up of post of Firemen reserved for OBC in Central Vehicle Depot, Delhi Cantt.

2811. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that candidates sponsored by the Emplyment Exchange in Group 'D' post (Firemen) in the reserved category of OBC who were declared selected in the Central Vehicle Depot, Delhi Cantt are waiting for joining their duties for a long period;

(b) whetehr it is also a fact that all selection formalities of the said selected candidates have since been completed;

(c) if so, the reasons for not allowing them to join their duties well in time; and

(d) the action contemplated in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU): (a) Yes, Sir. Three candidates belonging to OBC category were selected for the post of Fireman on 6th September, 1995 in Central Vehicle Depot, Delhi Cantt. and are awaiting the issue of appointment letters.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) The selected persons could not be given appointment as an application in the Principal Bench, Central Administrative Tribunal, New Delhi was filled by an SC candidate, who was selected earlier in CVD Delhi Cantt. against this selection and the Court has issued interim orders.

Hydrological Survey in Orissa

2812. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Ground Water